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A Threefold Defense of Perceptual Dogmatism

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement

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The College of William and Mary

by

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1. Introduction

Perceptual dogmatism states that if it perceptually seems to S that P, then S thereby has *prima facie* justification for the belief that P (adapted from Tucker 2010: 529). Perceptual dogmatism (and its close relatives: phenomenal conservatism, entitlement conservatism, and experiential coherentism) has received some appeal in the last couple decades, but has also come under attack by various objections. I endorse dogmatism and thus feel the duty to defend it. This paper aims to defend dogmatism from three of the most difficult objections: (1) the subject's perspective objection, (2) the problem of easy justification, and (3) cognitive penetration.

1.1 Perceptual Dogmatism

The dogmatism I am defending is a theory about perceptual propositional justification. In the literature, dogmatism (and its close relatives) have broader scopes that extend to intellectual and/or memorial justification as well as doxastic justification. But here, I am concerned with a narrower scope. Propositional justification is justification *for* S to believe that P, whereas doxastic justification is a property of beliefs *themselves*. For example, I might be justified in believing that it's raining outside, but the belief that it's raining outside, might be unjustified. The belief itself might be unjustified insofar as I base the belief on reasons that do not constitute my propositional justification, in the case of dogmatism, the appropriate base might be the seeming 'that it's raining outside'. Now I am aware of a debate over the fundamentality of propositional versus doxastic justification. I am not making a contribution to this debate.

I think that one can appreciate my defense of dogmatism without committing to either side of that debate. However, I will say this, it's clear that one can have good reasons for believing a proposition that P, but the belief *itself* can be unjustified. This is possible in case one bases the proposition on bad reasons despite perhaps having good reasons to believe it, hence my raining outside example. Epistemologists sometimes call this *ill-foundedness*. Dogmatism has nothing to say (as it is here construed) about what makes beliefs well-founded versus ill-founded, in other words, perceptual dogmatism is not a theory about doxastic justification.

Moving forward, my kind of dogmatism states that when it perceptually seems to S that P, then S thereby has non-inferential *prima facie* justification for the belief that P. Non-inferential justification amounts to justification that does not rest on *any* other justification or beliefs one may possess. All that is required is that it perceptually seem to S that P is the case. In other words, the perceptual justification that S receives “consists solely in its perceptually seeming a certain way” to him (Tucker 2014: 38).

What does it mean for it to perceptually *seem* to S that P? What I have in mind is a perceptual experience. I'll go ahead and be explicit: I endorse the experiential analysis of seemings as opposed to the belief or dispositional analysis. The belief analysis states that a seeming that P = a belief that P. The dispositional analysis states that a seeming that P = a disposition to believe that P.¹ Now here I have to be careful because I am making some assumptions about the philosophy of mind. I am assuming that perceptual experiences have propositional content that can be true or false. In a perceptual

¹ For further discussion on analyses of seemings, see (Tucker 2013: 3-6).

experience, I am *appeared to* in a certain way or the world is *represented* to me in a certain way. These representations have propositional contents, i.e., they are about something or directed at something. Seemings are intentional and this intentional property is stated in the perceptual dogmatism formulation. Suppose Jack is having a perceptual experience of seeing a cat, it seems to him that there is a cat nearby. The content of his experience (the seeming) is 'that there is a cat nearby'. Now the content of the experience could be true or false. It's true insofar as there *actually* is a cat nearby and it's false in case there *actually* is not a cat nearby. There could be many reasons that Jack is having the experience of a cat being nearby, but the content is false. Jack could be an evil-demon victim, he could have taken a hallucinatory drug, he could be a brain-in-a-vat etc. On the other hand, there are also many reasons it could be that Jack's content is true. He could have reliable perception, he could be the victim of an epistemic angel, etc. But notice too that dogmatism is *not* committed to constraints on the etiology of the belief's formation. Jack need not be *aware* or even *reflect* on the experience or the belief's etiology. He need *only* have the seeming as of a cat's being nearby.

It's important to keep in mind here that the truth condition on knowledge is separate from the condition of justification. Of course, other beliefs one may have might defeat or undermine the prima facie justification one has in virtue of it seeming that P, this is just the nature of justification qua prima facie (it's not "all things considered"). I could have the standing belief of $\sim P$ and have the seeming that P and thereby believe that P perhaps justifiedly, but then later become aware of the standing belief of $\sim P$ and

that might defeat my belief that P. This is all allowed. One other way to consider this is in terms of states of affairs. At time t, Jack is appeared to ϕ -ly = [J, ϕ , t]. If we consider just this state of affairs: [J, ϕ , t], it seems the appropriate attribution of justification is positive. We are not here concerned with wider states of affairs, perhaps that Jack has taken hallucinatory drugs. That might be good defeating evidence, but in the state of affairs under consideration, it's neither here nor there. The justification conferred is *prima facie*.

Moreover, background beliefs, introspection, and other evidence might further one's justification for a belief that P. So far, I have spoken of defeating evidence. But it's also true that wider states of affairs considered, one could be *ultima facie* justified. The dogmatist allows for this. He only claims that there is a kind of justification one has for perceptual beliefs that does not rest on other beliefs, awareness, etc. One need only have a seeming that P to be *prima facie* justified. In other words, the justification conferred by a seeming that P would be conferred even if S has no standing beliefs, awareness, etc. in favor of P. What follows from this is that S need not cite any argument for her belief that P for her to be justified. One need not cite any evidence or argument to be justified in believing that P, seems to be a common sense intuition, and, as I see it, it's a virtue not a bug.

Another thing we can say about dogmatism is that it is a fallibilist epistemology. However, few fallibilists are dogmatists. What accounts for this difference is the fact that dogmatism claims that seemings are "trustworthy for free" and that one can be perceptually justified in believing that P without having to cite *anything* in P's favor.

Again, the only thing that perceptual justification consists in is its perceptually seeming a certain way to S. Right now, it seems to me that my coffee cup is next to the computer. I might be wrong about this, but it seems that the mere fact that I am having the experience with that content justifies me (*prima facie*) in believing it. Given this experience, the most reasonable thing to do is to believe the content, that my coffee cup is next to the computer. Imagine the converse, that I have an experience with content P and I disbelieve P (all else being equal). This just seems mistaken.

1.2 A Word on Some Related Views

To further distinguish perceptual dogmatism (PD) from other related views, I want to take time to explicate those related views. Phenomenal conservatism (PC) states that: if it seems to S that P, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some justification for believing that P (Huemer 2007: 30). Compare PC against PD and the difference is subtle in wording, but vast in commitment. PC is the generalized theory of perceptual dogmatism insofar as PD is restricted to perceptual seemings whereas PC generalizes to memorial, introspective, and intellectual seemings. When I think about the proposition that no completely blue object is simultaneously red, it seems to me that this proposition is true; this is an intellectual appearance (more specifically, an intuition)" (Huemer 2013: IEP "Phenomenal Conservatism"). When I recall that Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president, it seems to me that that proposition is true; this is a memorial seeming. So PC agrees with all that PD claims, but generalizes to other purported sorts of seemings.²

² Huemer has described PC in two different ways (2001 & 2007). I am not going into the specifics of his analysis for the sake of room here. Moreover, his specific formulation need not concern us because it has no bearing on the general concept of PC contrasted with PD.

Entitlement conservatism (EC) is the view that a perceptual belief that P is justified for S if and only if (i) it perceptually seems to S that P and (ii) S is entitled to discount skeptical hypotheses. What does entitlement amount to? An entitlement to P is a given status, that is, for S to be entitled to P, S need not have any evidence or achievements for P. More specifically, this entitlement is *justification* to discount skeptical hypotheses. So this justification is conferred in the form of entitlement. Compared to PD, EC has one extra condition, namely, the entitlement condition. Thus, EC allows for perceptual seemings to be a constituent of perceptual justification, but it's not the sole or sufficient constituent.

Lastly, experiential coherentism is the view that a perceptual belief that P is justified for S if and only if (i) S has a perceptual experience as of P and (ii) the experience as of P coheres with pre-existing beliefs held by S. Some philosophers suggest that "fit" with experience is a necessary condition on justification, where fit is understood as a type of coherence. Here again, we have two constituents required for justification. Compared to PD, experiential coherentism takes the experiential constituent and adds more besides.

PD, on my view, does not need the extras of entitlement conservatism or experiential coherentism, these conditions are not necessary on my view. Crucially though, I'm not claiming that phenomenal conservatism is false. PC is not in conflict with PD, as I have characterized them. In this paper, I remain neutral as to whether PC is true or not. On the other hand, I write this paper to defend PD, so I do think that experiential coherentism and entitlement conservatism are false, but I am not offering

any objections to these views. My plan for the rest of this paper is defend perceptual dogmatism against the most brutal objections in the literature. In section 2.0, I will lay out the subject's perspective objection to dogmatism and defend against it. In section 3.0, I will deal with the problem of easy justification. Lastly, in section 4.0, I will defend against the charge of cognitive penetration.

2.0 The Subject's Perspective Objection and Perceptual Dogmatism

Internalism about justification is, roughly, the idea that justification supervenes only on mental states internal to the subject, e.g. awareness, acquaintance, seemings, etc. Externalism denies this, claiming that justification need not supervene *solely* on mental states, i.e., reliabilism. Spelled out this way, the distinction between internalism and externalism is not as clean cut, at least, given a particular internalist view and an externalist view, the difference might be small. Michael Bergmann thinks that what is *really* distinctive of internalist views is that they always require awareness of that which contributes to the justification of the belief in question, whereas externalist views require no such thing. So one way to object to reliabilism is by attacking the lack of awareness on the part of the subject. Cases like Norman the clairvoyant attempt to do this. The intuition behind these cases is that awareness is required for justification because lack of awareness entails accidentally true beliefs from the subject's perspective. Here's Norman the clairvoyant:

Norman, under certain conditions that usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of a such a

cognitive power, or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the president is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power, under circumstances in which it is completely reliable (BonJour 2001: 21).

BonJour thinks that if a belief is accidentally true from the subject's perspective, then the subject cannot be justified in his belief. This is known as the subject's perspective objection (SPO) to externalism. In this sense, the SPO can be used as motivation for internalism. For if the SPO is successful, in the sense that accidentally true beliefs preclude justification, then externalism is mistaken.

But the intuition behind the SPO can be also be applied for an objection against *internalist* theories. Bergmann claims that awareness can be broken up into strong and weak awareness. Strong awareness entails S's being aware of the justification contributor X to belief B such that S *justifiably* believes that X is relevant to the justification of B. Weak awareness does not require of S that she conceive of the justification contributor (the object of awareness) as in some way relevant to the appropriateness of holding B, i.e., weak awareness is *mere* awareness of X. What is distinctive of internalist views is that they always require some sort of awareness, but the question is: is the required awareness strong enough to avoid accidentally true beliefs? BonJour's Norman has no awareness. It's clear that if awareness is required for avoiding accidentality from the subject's perspective, then Norman is out of luck. But

when an internalist view requires awareness, is it sufficient to avoid accidentality? Or does the awareness need to be stronger?

So given Bergmann's distinction between weak and strong awareness, which kind is entailed by PD? Clearly, it is not strong awareness because S need not have a justified belief about the seeming's relevance to the justification of the belief that P. Bergmann thinks that PD entails weak awareness because a seeming is conscious and PD requires no more than that S have the seeming. We'll see later that Bergmann uses this to object to PD using the SPO. That is, if PD requires weak awareness, it is not sufficient to avoid accidentally true beliefs from the subject's perspective.

So the objection from Bergmann is one way the SPO can be used against PD, but there is another way that has recently been given by Lyons (2015: 158-60), Chudnoff and Didomenico (2015: 539-42), and Reiland (2015: 524-5). They object to PD by questioning whether seemings *alone* have the power to justify. If they do not, then PD might face SPO worries. If seemings are not evidencing, then they do not avoid accidentally true beliefs from the subject's perspective. But moreover, seemings do not even give S a reason to believe that P. We'll see later that it's not clear whether this is an SPO objection. I suspect that the objection is not as robust as these philosophers seem to think. For now, I'll assume that the SPO can arise in at least two ways against PD: (1) by attacking the type of awareness required for justification and (2) by attacking the metaphysics of seemings. The plan for this section is to set up the objection from Bergmann and give my defense. Then I'll move to the metaphysics of seemings objection and provide my response.

2.2 Bergmann's Objection to PD³

Bergmann's 2013 most clearly lays out the objection to PD. Bergmann formulates PD in terms of doxastic justification⁴ as follows:

PD*: S's belief that P is prima facie perceptually justified only if: (1) it perceptually seems to S that P and (2) S is aware of this seeming (i.e., it is a conscious seeming); it is *not* necessary that (3) S conceive of this seeming that P as being in some way relevant to the truth or justification of the belief that P (Bergmann 2013: 167).

Bergmann also formulates the SPO as follows:

SPO: If the believing subject isn't aware of what her belief has going for it, then from her perspective, it is an accident that the belief is true, in which case the belief isn't justified (Bergmann 2013: 168).⁵

What exactly does it mean for a belief to be an accident from the subject's perspective?

Bergmann goes through various options here, but ultimately argues that the follow account of non-accidentality is most plausible⁶:

NonAcc: It's false that it's an accident from S's perspective that her belief B is true iff: *S is aware of X and S believes that X indicates B's truth (or at least*

³ Bergmann's (2013) presents the objection to phenomenal conservatism, but here I am concerned with PD, so much of what I explicate will be altered accordingly (except for the fact that Bergmann frames the objection in terms of doxastic justification. I will stay consistent with him here). This will not make a difference to his overall project or mine.

⁴ This formulation is also specific to weak awareness, hence clause (3).

⁵ For discussion, see BonJour 1985: 42-44; Bergmann 2006: 11-12.

⁶ For the sake of space, I am going along with Bergmann here, but it won't matter too much that I am doing this.

conceives of X as being relevant to B's truth or justification) (Bergmann 2013: 168).

Notice that NonAcc sets a high standard for avoiding accidentality. Essentially, NonAcc imposes strong awareness requirements. NonAcc together with the SPO, claims Bergmann, leaves PD* out of luck for avoiding the SPO. If NonAcc is what is required for avoiding accidentality, then PD* fails. Bergmann motivates this objection by considering the following case⁷:

John: John is aware of his perceptual seeming that the dog has long white cords and holds the belief that the dog is a komondor (but not because of the seeming, rather because he read a poem about a komondor yesterday.) The seeming is in fact a good indicator of the belief's truth, but John does not recognize the seeming as such. From John's perspective, it is an accident that his komondor belief is true. (Bergmann 2013: 170)

John is supposed to show the shortcoming of PD*, particularly clause (3). If John had conceived of his long white cord seeming as indicative of the truth of his belief that the dog is a komondor, then the belief would be justified for him. But John does not do this, and PD* does not require this. So, PD* entails that John's belief is justified. Moreover, having *mere* awareness of some mental state that is a good indicator of a belief's truth, is not sufficient for avoiding the SPO, i.e., accidentality from S's perspective. The basic schema for this case is that S is aware of a seeming X and S holds belief B (but not

⁷ Again, I am modifying the case to be targeting PD specifically.

because of X). X is in fact a good indicator of B's truth but S doesn't recognize X as such. From S's perspective, it is an accident that B is true.

Recall though that seemings are a distinct type of mental state that have the phenomenal character of *assertiveness* or *felt veridicality*. Tolhurst tells us that what separates seemings from other mental states, e.g., desires and hopes, is that seemings have "the feel of a state whose content reveals how things really are" (Tolhurst 1998: 299). Because of this phenomenology, believing the content of a seeming is experienced as objectively fitting. So now consider the following:

*John**: John has the seeming that P and the desire that P. The seeming is in fact a good indicator of P's truth, but the desire is not. However, John bases his belief that P on the desire and not the seeming.

Here, we have a more complete picture. Basing a belief on a desire is not an appropriate response to a seeming. But the important point here, is that basing a belief that P on a desire that P is *not* enough to avoid the SPO. John*'s belief is unjustified on my view. But not because it is accidentality true from John*'s perspective, rather because John* based his belief on bad evidence. If this is right, then when John has the long white cord seeming that is indicative of the truth of the belief that the dog is a komondor, but bases the belief on his having read a poem about komondors yesterday, his belief is not justified. Basing a belief on bad evidence (like having read a poem about komondors) does not justify the belief for S.

Logan Gage (2015: 53) points this out, claiming that Bergmann neglected to implement the basing relation in his formulation of PD*. Gage reformulates it as follows:

PD**: S's belief that P is *prima facie* justified only if (1) it seems to S that P and (2) S is aware of this seeming (i.e., it is a conscious seeming); it is *not* necessary that (3) S conceives of this seeming that P as being in some way relevant to the truth or justification of the belief that P; *and* (4) *S must base the belief that P upon S's seeming that P.* (Gage 2015: 53)

What is it for S to have an epistemic reason for her belief? In general, when S holds belief B, there exists a ground *for which* that belief is held by her. The grounds for belief would be the epistemic reason. In our case, a seeming that P is an epistemic reason for S's belief that P. When S bases the belief that P on the seeming that P, S has made the appropriate connection between her epistemic reason and her belief. PD** claims that it is necessary that S makes this connection for her belief to be justified.

Having a more accurate formulation of PD* is great, but it's *still* not enough. If Bergmann's account of what it is for a belief to be an accident from the subject's perspective is right, then PD** is hopeless. For if S has a seeming that P and bases the belief that P on the seeming then according to NonAcc, S's belief is only accidentally true. Might there be an alternative account? I want to point out that NonAcc sets a high bar for avoiding accidentality. What one may wonder is whether there is another account that sets a more minimal requirement (and PD** satisfies!).

Rogers and Matheson interpret non-accidentality in a more common sense way. Imagine that I fill up a cup of coffee and accidentally spill it on myself while thinking about the SPO. It would be surprising to me that I spilled the coffee. Likewise, if a belief of mine turned out true by accident, I would be surprised that it turned out true. But if I

had an *epistemic reason* to believe the content of the belief, it's hard to see how it would be surprising to me if the belief turned out true. Moreover, if I base my belief on that epistemic reason, I think it would be impossible for it to be surprising from my perspective that it turn out true. Bergmann's intuition about accidentally true beliefs is that they are no different from a "stray hunch or arbitrary conviction" (Bergmann 2006: 12). But you might wonder (as I do), that Bergmann's NonAcc is too high of a standard; it gets the job done, but an alternative account could also do the work without such a high standard. Gage proposes an alternative that I think is correct because it imposes minimal requirements, distinguishes the relevant belief from a stray hunch, and coheres with the more common sense notion of accidentality. Gage states:

NonAcc*: It's false that it's an accident from S's perspective that her belief B is true iff: *S has an epistemic reason for her belief B, bases her belief B on this epistemic reason, and has no believed defeaters for B.* (Gage 2015: 55)

The epistemic reason in NonAcc* would be a seeming that B due to the felt veridicality or assertiveness of the seeming. So what goes wrong in John** case is that John** bases his belief on bad evidence, i.e., he does not base it on the epistemic reason (seeming). Were he to base it on the seeming, then it would not be an accident that it turns out true.

Let me be clear here, Bergmann's NonAcc likely rules out accidentality, but why require so much of the subject? The reason I find Gage's NonAcc* more plausible is that it does the same work as NonAcc but with less of a standard. This is an economic point, for if we can do the same work with less, then we ought to endorse the less

robust account. So my response in slogan form, if you will, is this: base your seemings on your beliefs and you won't be surprised by their truth. If we pack in the basing relation to PD* and couple that with a plausible account of what it means to avoid accidentality from the subject's perspective (NonAcc*), then PD* survives Bergmann's SPO objection.

2.3 The Metaphysics of Seemings and the SPO

Let's turn now to the objection given by Reiland, Chudnoff and Didomenico, and Lyons. To really see the force of their objection, I want to get clear about how I think of seemings. I think of perceptual experience as having two separable components, (1) sensations and (2) seemings. That is, it is nomologically possible for S to have a seeming without a sensation and vice-versa. This view is supported by some empirical work in cognitive and neuroscience.⁸ But when a sensation does accompany a seeming, it is the sensation that normally "comes first", it is antecedent to the seeming. Sensations pick out states that have what some might call "low-level" content, that is, rich, non-conceptual phenomenology.⁹ Seemings, on the other hand, pick out states that have "high-level" content derived from concept application processing. Seemings pick out a genuine mental state, one that is experienced as revealing how things really are. Tucker's 2010 claims that seemings have the phenomenological property of

⁸ Poppel, Frost, and Held (1973), Stoerig (1997), Weiskrantz, Warrington, Sanders, and Marshall (1974), Milner and Goodale (2008). But it's important to be critical about whether the distinctions in the science map onto the philosophy.

⁹ If shape recognition is low-level and low-level sensations do not have justificatory power, then we might be faced with some skeptical worries about shape recognition.

Assertiveness (530).¹⁰ Just as assertiveness can come in degrees, so can seemings. It seems to me that a desk is in front of me, but it *really* (very much so) seems to me that $2+2=4$. PD is committed to the claim that these high level states (seemings) do the justifying, not the low level sensory states because low-level states lack the necessary phenomenal character. Moreover, S's being in a low level sensory state is neither necessary nor sufficient for justification. But S's being in a high level, seeming state is necessary and sufficient for justification (assuming no relevant no defeaters).

When a seeming and a sensation are present, which is often, the mechanism might look like this:

“Distal stimuli” → *sensation* → *seeming*¹¹

The idea that a seeming could occur without a sensation might seem counterintuitive given how I have formulated the above mechanism, but I think the intuition that a seeming is dependent upon the relevant sensation is tracking an empirical question about the nature of low versus high level content. I'm not going to concern myself with this question here.

The objectors claim that their objection is the kind where the SPO applies. That is, given PD, the subject's perspective is not sufficiently involved in justification. Bergmann casts the SPO in terms of awareness of what a belief has going for it, in this sense it concerns the subject's perspective's role in conferring justification or the relation between the subject and his evidence. I think that this construal of the SPO captures a criterion for when it applies as an objection to a particular view.

¹⁰ For further discussion, see Huemer (2001: 77-9), Tollhurst (1998: 298-9)

¹¹ I think the arrows here indicate a causal relation, but it might be an empirical question what the relevant kind of relation is, if not causal.

Criterion for the SPO: If an objection O concerns the subject's *awareness* of evidence E in a way such that it shows accidentality from the subject's perspective (in relation to the truth of the relevant proposition), then the SPO applies.

I'm jumping the gun a little, but just to be explicit, I think that the objection these philosophers have given is misconstrued. I think that the best version of their objection does not fit the criterion for the SPO to apply. Here, I am concerned with objections to PD where the SPO applies, so if the philosophers' objection fails the criterion, then it won't be in my remit. Moreover, because these philosophers take this objection to be a version of the SPO, if I am right, then they'll have to recast their objection in different terms. I'll offer what I take their objection to be about, in terms that are more appropriate for their purposes. Perhaps the recast objection succeeds, perhaps it does not.

To make it clear that the objectors conceive of their objection to PD as a version of the SPO, consider the following from Reiland's 2015:

Dogmatists usually think that the experience-related state that provides evidence does so in virtue of its phenomenology (Chudnoff, 2013; Huemer, 2001; Pryor, 2000; Tucker, 2010, p. 533). But consider what having a seeming by itself without a [sensation] would be like. It would be like being told by an inner voice that something is the case (e.g. that it is black all around you, that this is a knight). But as Jack Lyons has put it, this would be exactly *'like blindsight, but with confidence'* or like the state Laurence Bonjour's clairvoyant Norman is in when he *'just knows'* that the president is in New York (Lyons, 2015). And it's

hard to see why an internalist would take this sort of phenomenology by itself to be *evidence-providing*. (524, italics mine)

I take this passage to be most representative of the objectors view of PD. Chudnoff and Didomenico (2015) claim that the intuition behind Norman is that “beliefs that result from judgements one just finds oneself making for reasons entirely beyond one’s ken are unreasonable” (545). They claim that this is exactly what happens in cases where S *just* has a seeming that P and no accompanying sensation. I take it that they think this kind of view is sufficient to conclude that the SPO applies to PD. But consider the argument in a more standard form:

- (1) If seemings and sensations are separable components of perceptual experience, then it is nomologically possible to have a seeming without a sensation and vice-versa.
- (2) Having a seeming without a sensation is like “blindsight with confidence”, i.e., a seeming is no different from an impulse or attraction to believe.
- (3) If a seeming alone is like blindsight with confidence, then seemings alone cannot provide justification for S to believe that P.
- (4) Therefore, PD should be rejected, i.e., seemings alone do not justify.

For the SPO to apply, the objection must make a statement about how the subject’s awareness of her evidence results in accidentally true beliefs. This is not what the argument shows. The argument actually questions whether or not seemings are evidencing states. This is a more fundamental problem. For if a seeming, according to the dogmatist, justifies in virtue of its phenomenology, and the objectors claim that

seemings alone cannot justify at all, then the objection invites the dogmatist to give an account of what kind of phenomenology is sufficient to count as a subject's *having* evidence. To be clear, the SPO concerns the subject's *relation* to his evidence. The objection under current review concerns whether the subject *has evidence at all*.

Recast, the objection is not completely unrelated to the SPO. Assume that seemings alone are not justification conferring, then we need to pack more into the theory to get justification. But perhaps even when we pack extra goodies into the theory we wonder about the subject's relation to that evidence and if the relation is such that it satisfies a plausible account of non-accidentality. But all of this is far removed from the objection under current review. One has to have evidence before talking about the relation to evidence.

In any case, if this is the most plausible interpretation of their objection, then they need to give an independent argument for how it is a version of the SPO. As far as I know, they have not provided one. Moreover, insofar as they take seemings alone to not be evidencing states, they also need an independent argument for *this* claim that does not appeal to the SPO. They will also need to use premises that the dogmatist will accept. The way that Tolhurst, Tucker, Huemer, and myself think of seemings is that they are characterized by their phenomenal character and that phenomenal character is such that it is sufficient for conferring justification. Merely denying this is not going to do much to persuade dogmatists that seemings are not evidencing. In other words, recast in terms of phenomenological sufficiency for evidence, it's not clear what this objection has going for it.

So my concern in this section is with SPO type objections to PD. Bergmann's objection is a paradigmatic instance of this because he questions the relation between the subject and his evidence with regards to accidentally true beliefs. On the other hand, Reiland, Chudnoff and Didomenico, and Lyons claim to have made an SPO type objection to PD, but in fact they have objected to whether a subject has evidence at all given PD's conception of seemings. That is, they claimed that seemings are not evidencing states. This does not qualify as a version of the SPO, so it's not in my crosshairs at the moment. Nonetheless, it's not clear that the recast objection has any force against the dogmatists because it does not provide an independent reason for doubting the evidencing power of seemings that the dogmatist will accept.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

This section attempted to show that two ways the SPO can arise for PD fail to show that PD is false. Bergmann's objection claims that PD's requirements on doxastic justification are not strong enough to overcome the SPO and NonAcc. I claimed that Bergmann's formulation of PD about doxastic justification was inaccurate and argued that his *John* case to motivate the objection is underspecified. Furthermore, *John* can be redescribed with seemings to show the epistemic failing of *John* rather than the belief being accidentally true. When we correctly understand PD about doxastic justification and get a more minimal account of NonAcc, perceptual dogmatism triumphs.

The objection from the metaphysics of seemings is meant, by the objectors, to be the type of objection where the SPO applies. But for that to be the case, the objection

must take issue with the S's relation to her evidence such that from her perspective, the belief is accidentally true. But the objectors' argument falls short of satisfying this criterion. Indeed, their argument takes issue with whether seemings are evidencing states at all. The real force of their objection was the claim to the SPO's application, so their argument has lost force. At least, they need to provide further reason for supposing the SPO applies in this objection. Furthermore, the objection, as it stands in the recast terms, does not use premises that the proponent of PD will likely find convincing. For the perceptual dogmatist claims that seemings justify in virtue of their phenomenal character. The objectors need to give some reason for thinking that seemings, thus understood, are not evidencing states. I have yet to see this argument.

3.0 Perceptual Dogmatism and Easy Justification

The problem of easy knowledge is well known, but the underpinnings of the problem can be applied to justification as well. Let's examine how PD fares. Here's the objection to dogmatism:

- (1) If a theory of justification allows for basic justification, then S can come to have justification for the reliability of her faculties in ways that are intuitively too easy:
 - (a) via closure and/or (b) via bootstrapping.
- (2) PD allows for basic justification by denying that S needs antecedent justification for the reliability of her faculties.
- (3) Therefore, PD allows for easy justification.
- (4) If a theory allows for easy justification, then it should be rejected.
- (5) Therefore, PD should be rejected.

It should be noted that theories that reject the following principle, allow for basic justification:

JR: perceptual experiences can justify S in believing that P only if S antecedently has justification for the reliability of his perceptual faculties (adapted from Cohen 2002: 309).

Basic justification can be defined as follows:

BJ: S has basic justification to believe that P just in case S is justified in believing that P prior to being justified in believing that his faculties are reliable (adapted from Cohen 2005: 417).

Suppose I have justification for the belief that I have a hand. According to PD, I get the justification via it perceptually seeming to me that I have a hand. I know that having a hand entails that I am not a brain in a vat, so now I have justification to believe that I am not a brain in a vat. Cohen thinks that my coming to have this justification for the belief that I am not a brain in a vat, is too easy and that this suggests that I probably did not have justification to believe that I have a hand in the first place. Which further suggests that the theory that allowed for this justification in the first place is mistaken. The easy justification objection is charging PD with being too permissive. I intend to defend PD from the objection in regards to both closure and bootstrapping.

3.1 The Objection via Closure

Consider the following closure principle about justification:

DCj: If S has justification believe that P and S knows that P entails Q, then S has justification to believe that Q¹².

The example above is an instance of easy justification via closure, but here's a more salient formulation:

(NM1) I have a hand.

(NM1*) If I have a hand, then I am not a brain in a vat.

(NM2) Therefore, I am not a brain in a vat.

Just to emphasis that the problem is not restricted to global skeptical concerns, consider Cohen's (in)famous red table case as well:

(RT1) The table is red.

(RT1*) If the table is red, then it is not white with red lights shining on it.

(RT2) Therefore the table is not white with red lights shining on it.

I have justification for both NM1 and RT1 in virtue of it perceptually seeming to me that I have a hand and that the table is red respectively. I also know that NM1 entails NM2 and RT1 entails RT2 by trivial entailment. Thus, according to DCj, I have justification to believe the conclusions NM2 and RT2. Given PD and DCj, the reasoning in both cases is acceptable, but surely, so the objector contends, there is something suspect here.

Jim Pryor and Chris Tucker have both wrote defending Moorean style arguments from this type of objection and so I'll be drawing on their works to make a case against the easy justification objection. But what exactly is wrong with RT1-RT2?

¹² DCj concerns only single premises. So the middle premises of NM and RT are not necessary for the entailment. NM1 entails NM2 and RT1 entails RT2.

Crispin Wright (2003) endorses JR and thinks that for Moore's experiences to give him any justification to believe that he has hands, Moore must have antecedent justification to rule out global skeptical hypotheses. Pryor disagrees and thinks that if Moore has some justification to believe that he has hands, he also has (at least as much) justification to believe that he's not a brain in a vat. But if Wright denies this, what's the issue? If we can get clear about the justificatory structure of the arguments, then we need only concern ourselves with whether the theory that allowed for the justification to begin with is the perpetrator. I intend to show that RT and NM display acceptable justificatory structures and that PD is not too permissive.

Pryor claims that (NM1) is *epistemically dependent* on the conclusion (NM2) and likewise for (RT1) and (RT2). If that is right, then maybe justification cannot be transmitted to the conclusion. But there is more than one way a premise can be epistemically dependent on a conclusion. For the sake of space, I'll limit the ways to the two most applicable to NM given by Pryor (2004):

ED1: that the conclusion be such that evidence against it would undermine the kind of justification S purports to have for the premise(s).

ED2: when having justification to believe the conclusion is among the conditions that make S have the justification S purports to have for the premise(s) (359).

Pryor claims, in relation to ED1, that “Moore’s argument clearly does exhibit this type of dependence. So long as we maintain the assumption that hands are external objects, any evidence that there is no external world will (to some degree) undermine Moore’s perceptual justification for believing he has hands” (359). Pryor asks then whether it possible for an argument to exhibit ED1 without ED2? He answers in the affirmative, but with a proviso. If one accepts JR, then the answer is “no”. Pryor denies JR, so the answer is “yes”. He writes:

But if you’re willing to be liberal¹³ about any undermining hypotheses, then you think there can be undermining hypotheses that you don’t need to be antecedently able to eliminate. This opens up room for arguments that have [ED1] dependence but not [ED2] (360).

A dogmatist about perception allows for ED1 without ED2. Pryor gives a few examples of arguments that he takes to be exhibiting ED1 without ED2. Here’s one:

Suppose you look at a wall that’s been painted red. Your visual experiences justify you in believing: (14) The wall is red.

You reason:

¹³ ‘Liberal’ here just means that, contra conservatism, S needn’t eliminate all possible undermining hypotheses. Entitlement conservatism would be a token instance of conservatism in this sense because S must antecedently have justification to discount global skeptical hypotheses.

(15) If the wall is red, it's not white but lit by tricky red lights that make it appear red.

(16) So the wall is not white but lit by tricky red lights (Pryor 2004: 361-62).

Pryor explains:

Here too I think your visual justification to believe the premise makes the conclusion more credible for you. Your justification to believe the wall is red contributes to the credibility of the claim that the wall isn't white but lit by tricky red lights. I think all of these arguments are epistemologically respectable: that is, they articulate structures your justification genuinely can have (362).

I agree with Pryor that NM and RT both have acceptable justificatory structures and the father's visual justification for RT1 together with DCj provides at least as much justification for RT2. But you might wonder if the argument has the power to resolve doubt. The son certainly doubts the conclusion. If this is true, then maybe I'm mistaken about the justification the father has. A deduction: *P, therefore C*, has the power to resolve doubt (about C) iff it is possible for S to go from doubting C to justified belief in C solely in virtue of accepting *P, therefore C* (Tucker 2010: IEP). Neo-Moorean (NM) arguments fail to resolve doubt because if S doubts that she is not a brain in a vat, then she cannot rationally believe that she has a hand. Why? Because the doubting of the conclusion (that S is not a brain in a vat) is a defeater for the premise of NM (that S has a hand). Doubting that you're not a brain in a vat precludes justified belief in the

proposition that you have a hand. Likewise, the son doubts that the table is not white with red lights shining on it, so justified belief in the premise that the table is red is precluded. Thus RT lacks the power to resolve doubt.

But it's false to accept this conclusion and subsequently infer that the arguments fail to transmit justification to their conclusion in virtue of their lacking the power to resolve doubt. An argument *P, therefore C* transmits justification to its conclusion just in case the conclusion is justified in virtue of the premises' being justified. Insofar as the father has perceptual justification for the belief that the table is red, the conclusion is more credible for him, and combined with DCj, he has justification for belief in the conclusion. The son might not be justified in believing the premise because of his doubts about the conclusion, but that does not mean that the father lacks justification about the conclusion. We need some further argument to show that lacking the power to resolve doubt is sufficient for failure to transmit justification.

I have given some argumentation for the claim that RT and NM transmit justification by appealing to a kind of error theory in which the objector claims that insofar as NM and RT lack the power to resolve doubt, they do not transmit justification to their conclusion. I claimed in response that it's not clear that an argument's lacking the power to resolve doubt is sufficient for it's failing to transmit justification. This explanation helps because it provides reason for thinking that insofar as the father has justification for RT1, he has at least as much justification for the conclusion. According to PD, insofar as the father has a perceptual seeming that the table is red, then he is justified in believing RT1.

But the question still remains: does PD provide the father with justification for RT1? Easy justification arises when a theory rejects JR, or allows for basic justification. So if PD is to avoid the objection, I need to show that JR is false. JR states that perceptual experiences can justify S in believing that P only if S antecedently has justification for the reliability of his perceptual faculties (adapted from Cohen 2002: 309).

Imagine Damian is being deceived by the evil demon, Abezethibou. Abezethibou makes all of Damian's perceptual beliefs false, i.e., Damian's perceptual faculties are completely unreliable, but Damian does not know this. He has no evidence that he is being deceived and he can never know this because the powerful Abezethibou will never allow for it. From Damian's perspective though, nothing is amiss. Does Damian still have justification to believe the content of his perceptual experiences? My intuition is that he does, because he appropriately responds to his evidence irrespective of the evidence's connection to truth. Moreover, we are talking about prima facie propositional justification. So if the evil Abezethibou got distracted by all of his victims and made a slight mistake in deceiving poor Damian (maybe Abezethibou reveals his master deception plan to his evil demon brother and forgets to mute himself to his victims), he would have reason to think he was being deceived and his justification would be defeated. Nonetheless, if the intuition behind this case is right, then that gives us some reason for thinking JR is false.

If JR is false, or at least, if we have some reason for doubting that it's true, then that allows for basic justification theories, like PD, to gain some traction. The plausibility of my discussion of justification transmission, coupled with PD, gives us good reason for

doubting the merit of the easy justification objection in relation to closure. Even if these arguments (NM and RT) lack the power to resolve doubt or have a certain kind of epistemic dependence (ED1), this is not sufficient for transmission failure. In addition, PD allows for the visual justification the father has for RT1 because we have some reason for doubting JR and allowing for basic justification. It might be easy justification, but it does not threaten the plausibility of PD.

3.2 Easy Justification by Bootstrapping and Dogmatism's Response

Just as easy knowledge arises for BKS theories through bootstrapping, easy justification arises for BJS theories through bootstrapping too. Dogmatism is a BJS theory, as I have defined it, so it will allow for bootstrapping and thus, easy justification. Bootstrapping, as Weisberg (2012) defines it, is reasoning that verifies a source's reliability by checking the source against itself (597). Vogel (2008) gives a paradigmatic example as follows:

Roxanne. The gas gauge in Roxanne's car is reliable, though she has no evidence about its reliability. On one occasion the gauge reads 'full', leading her to believe that the tank is full, which it is. She also notes that the gauge reads 'full', and concludes by deduction that the gauge read correctly on this occasion. She then repeats this procedure many times on other occasions, eventually

coming to believe that the gauge is reliable, since it read correctly on each occasion (518-9).

Roxanne notes what the gauge says on each occasion, deduces that it was correct on each occasion, and subsequently infers that the gauge is generally reliable. I think it's fair to say that deduction and inference are reliable processes, and here, they are used correctly, so the suspect process in bootstrapping is the initial step. And, in fact, this is what Cohen has in mind in his 2002. It's not the reasoning, it's the allowance of knowledge (or in our case, justification) prior to knowing the faculty is reliable-- the allowance of basic knowledge (basic justification).

But of course, how do we come to know our faculties are reliable prior to obtaining knowledge of particular facts? Epistemic circularity is lurking in the background. And this is specifically the motivation for allowing basic knowledge and basic justification. Consider the following argument from Lemos (2004):

1. Perceptual knowledge requires that S know that his perceptual systems are reliable.
2. The only epistemically satisfactory way to know that one's perceptual systems are reliable is via a non-circular argument.
3. The proponent of basic knowledge has no such argument.
4. Therefore, basic knowledge ought to be rejected (24).

If premises (1) and (2) are true, then basic knowledge is threatened. I think (3) is probably true, so we have to reject (1) or (2) to save basic knowledge. But here, I want to ask: is bootstrapping circular? And if it is, is it *bad* circularity? In the previous section,

we explored the neo-moorean argument and the red table argument and concluded that they are capable of transmitting justification, but perhaps they lack the power to resolve doubt. We examined two types of epistemic dependence from Pryor. Let's consider them again:

ED1: that the conclusion be such that evidence against it would undermine the kind of justification S purports to have for the premise(s).

ED2: when having justification to believe the conclusion is among the conditions that make S have the justification S purports to have for the premise(s) (Pryor 2004: 359).

Consider a salient formulation of the argument from Roxanne:

Roxanne Argument

1. At t_1 , R forms the belief that the tank is full, and the tank is full.
2. At t_3 , R forms the belief that the tank is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, and the tank is $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
3. At t_4 , R forms the belief that the tank is $\frac{1}{2}$ full, and the tank is $\frac{1}{2}$ full.
4. At t_n , R forms the belief that the tank is n full, and the tank is n full.
5. R forms the belief that the tank is generally reliable.

I think it's clear that Roxanne Argument is guilty of ED1, but it's not clear that it's guilty of ED2. Imagine that Roxanne did have justification for believing the conclusion. Is that a precondition of her forming the belief that, say, that the tank is $\frac{1}{2}$ full? I think this is true only if we accept this general principle:

Perceptual belief formation requires that S have justification that his perceptual systems are reliable.

This principle is false because having justification for the reliability of my perceptual systems presupposes perceptual belief formation. For to have justification for the reliability of my faculties, it must be the case that I employ my faculties to gain that justification. So I don't think that bootstrapping is guilty of ED2, and ED2 seems like a good candidate for *bad* circularity. But is ED1 bad? Like I said in the last section, the neo-moorean argument and the red table argument are guilty of ED1, but nonetheless they are capable of transmitting justification. ED1 might lead to the inability to resolve doubt, but Moore and the father both have justification for believing the conclusion. I think we can say the same for Roxanne, and thus, for bootstrapping in general.

If the issue Cohen is getting at is that to have perceptual justification, S must have justification for the reliability of her perceptual faculties, then Cohen is just trying to motivate JR, which I showed we have good reason to doubt. So again, Roxanne, insofar as she has justification for the premises of the argument, she has at least as much justification for the conclusion. PD gives her *prima facie* perceptual justification, couple this with my discussion of transmission, and Roxanne comes out fine. Her argument may exhibit ED1 and lack the power to resolve doubt, but she is justified nonetheless.

4.0 Perceptual Dogmatism and Cognitive Penetration

Cognitive penetration is not easy to define, in part because it's not clear that it exists. My concern, however, are the epistemic implications of such a phenomena *were*

it to exist. In very general terms, cognitive penetration is the idea that a mental state causes another mental state in an internal way. That is, the causal chain between mental state A and B is entirely within the subject. A rather popular case is where a subject has a visual experience of an achromatic banana and reports the color as slightly yellow. We can describe the psychology here in terms of cognitive penetration: S antecedently believes that in the past, most bananas are yellow¹⁴. She sees the achromatic banana and due to the antecedent belief, comes to experience the banana as being yellow (her visual experience represents the banana as being yellow) and forms the belief that the banana is yellow on the basis of that experience. But notice that the experience of the banana is in part caused by the antecedent belief, this is what makes this case a case of cognitive penetration of experience. Susanna Siegel (2012) defines cognitive penetrability of experience as follows: “if visual experience is cognitively penetrable, then it is nomologically possible for two subjects (or for one subject in different counterfactual circumstances, or at different times) to have visual experiences with different contents while seeing *and attending* to the same distal stimuli under the same external conditions, as a result of differences in other cognitive (including affective) states”(205-6). Examples of penetrating states include: beliefs (occurrent or dispositional), desires (including wishful thinking), and implicit biases.

Cognitive penetration of experience might be an epistemically good thing for a subject. Suppose I know that there are lots of snakes on a particular trail I’m going to hike (suppose I know this from reliable testimony). My belief in the presence of snakes

¹⁴ It is unclear that it’s beliefs of the subject doing the work here or associations made in subpersonal “systems”. But just for the sake of the example, let’s assume it’s beliefs.

might cause me to identify more snakes, than if I didn't know that there were many snakes on the trail. There does not seem to be anything pernicious about such a case. On the other hand, some philosophers think that there are epistemically bad cases of cognitive penetration of experience. Here is one such case:

Novice and Expert are gold miners. Novice is just starting out in the gold mining business, but Expert has been gold mining for 40 years and has excellent gold identification skills. One day, Novice and Expert are mining together and they both spot a gold-looking rock. The rock is, as a matter of fact, a piece of gold.

Expert successfully identifies the piece of gold in virtue of his learned identification skills and forms the belief that it is a piece of gold on that basis.

Novice, however, forms the belief that it is a piece of gold, *not* in virtue of learned identification skills, but because he really wants it to be a piece of gold (adapted from Markie 2013: 257).

So here we have a classic case of wishful thinking. The case attempts to pump the intuition that Novice is not justified in believing that the rock is gold, but Expert is justified. What makes this difference? Allegedly, the etiology of the experience. Novice's visual experience is caused by his wishful thinking whereas Expert's visual experience is caused by his identification skills. The claim is that some prior mental states are inappropriate as the basis or cause of visual experiences. And thereby the resulting experiences cannot serve as justification contributors.

Perceptual dogmatism claims that if it seems to S that P, then S thereby has *prima facie* justification for the belief that P. The objection to PD is as follows:

- (1) According to PD, a seeming is a distinct mental state of visual experience that confers justification “for free”.
- (2) If an inappropriate mental state causes a perceptual experience, then the experience cannot justify belief in its content.
- (3) But PD is inconsistent with (2).
- (4) Therefore, PD is false¹⁵.

Susanna Siegel (2012, 2013a, 2013b) thinks that theories of justification need to require etiological constraints on visual experience if visual experience is to justify belief in its content. She is inspired by regress arguments for foundationalism which claim that an unjustified belief B1 cannot serve to justify B2. Likewise, inappropriate mental states that cause visual experiences cannot serve to justify beliefs in their content. Siegel thinks that experiences can be ir/rational, so if inappropriate mental states cause a certain visual experience, that experience is “epistemically downgraded” or it has dropped below the threshold of rationality necessary to justify belief in its content. But I’m not sure you have to accept that experiences are ir/rational to evaluate the epistemic implications of the cognitive penetration of experience. It seems to me that the objection can still be pressed because if experiences are caused by inappropriate mental states, this is enough to claim that the experience cannot justify its content. I’ll proceed on this assumption¹⁶.

¹⁵ PD is inconsistent because it places no constraints on which prior mental states are appropriate. Better yet, regardless of the etiology, seemings always justify belief in their contents.

¹⁶ Siegel (2013b) gives a response to the type of response I will give in this paper, but it relies upon viewing visual experiences as rationally assessable. Her argument for the claim that experiences are rationally assessable is something like this: experiences are content. If experiences have content, then they are intentional states. Fears are intentional states and fears are rationally assessable, so experiences are rationally assessable. Her claim then, is that experiences have a threshold level of

So the cognitive penetration objection to perceptual dogmatism rests on the assumption that seemings are cognitively penetrable, that is, what we mean by “the cognitive penetration of a visual experience E” is that the seeming in E is penetrated by some prior mental state. So in Novice’s case, it seeming to him that the rock is gold is caused by his wishful thinking. But the question becomes then, why think that the causal history of the seeming matters to its ability to justify? Jim Pryor (2000) seems to take this line of reasoning in is response:

The claim ‘observation is theory-laden’ might mean that what theory you hold can causally affect what experiences you have...For instance, if you believe that the object you’re looking at is a...carrot, you’re likely to experience it as being more orange than you would if you lacked that belief....Does this...show that your justification for believing that object is orange cannot be immediate? It does not. I’m concerned with which transitions from experience to belief would result in justified belief. The present claim concerns how one comes to have the experiences, in the first place. These are independent issues (541).

But Siegel (2012) responds:

Pryor says cognitive penetration itself doesn’t impede immediate justification, because it need not introduce justificatory intermediaries. This seems correct. He also suggests that it doesn’t impede immediate justification at all, on the grounds that etiology and justification are independent issues. But the cases just described suggest that the etiology introduced by cognitive penetration does

rationality that is sufficient for justifying belief in their content. But “checkered” experiences can downgrade the rationality of experience below that threshold. Therefore, checkered experiences, when they are downgraded fail to justify.

sometimes impede justification, not because it forces the structure of justification to be mediate rather than immediate, but *because some kinds of etiology seem to place constraints on when experience can justify beliefs at all* – a fortiori, on when experiences can immediately justify them (212).

Siegel thinks that etiology matters, Pryor does not. But if etiology matters, what can help? Siegel (2012) proposes the following:

If you notice, suspect, or are in a position to notice that: you have an experience that *p* when *and because* you antecedently believe *p* or favor *p* as a hypothesis, then your experience that *p* by itself does not suffice to justify the belief (217).

Now here, the dogmatist can agree with Siegel because in such cases, *S* would have a defeater. But what ought we to say about those cases where the subject does not or cannot notice or suspect penetration? Is this the end for dogmatism?

Some philosophers (McGrath and Markie) seem to think so, at least, they think that the way I have defined dogmatism is doomed. So they offer revised accounts, that is, they add on extra conditions to quell cognitive penetration worries. Their goal is to satisfy the etiological constraint that Siegel suggests. Although my goal is to argue that dogmatism, as I have defined it, is safe from cognitive penetration, let's consider McGrath's and Markie's proposals briefly.

4.1 McGrath's Quasi-Inferred Seemings

McGrath (2013) makes a distinction between two types of seemings: (1) quasi-inferred seemings and (2) receptive seemings. A seeming is quasi-inferred if there is an "inference-like" dependence between the seeming in question and either (a)

another seeming or (b) a belief. A receptive seeming is a seeming that is not the output of a quasi-inferential transition and always provides foundational justification for its content. At best, a quasi-inferred seeming can provide derivative justification for its content. McGrath claims that a quasi-inferred seeming that P derivatively justifies its content P just in case the “basis” of the quasi-inferred seeming also justifies P. A basis of a quasi-inferred seeming is that state (belief or seeming) which the inference-like dependence obtains. To the current point, Novice’s belief that the object is a piece of gold is unjustified because his seeming (P) “the object is gold” is quasi-inferred from the seeming (Q) “the object is yellow”. Since Q does not evidentially support P, Novice is unjustified (McGrath 2013: 236-44).

The problem I have with this response is that the inference-like dependence that is supposed to save dogmatism is a little mysterious. The spirit of dogmatism is that experiences provide *immediate* justification, albeit *prima facie*. So not only is the dependence relation mysterious, it runs against one of dogmatism’s motivations. Moreover, inference-like dependence seems to me to be a kind of basing relation. For those proponents of phenomenal conservatism and dogmatism, the basing relation is reserved for doxastic justification. Dogmatism, of the kind I am defending, is a theory of propositional justification. It’s hard to see why a basing relation of the “inference-like” type McGrath endorses is required for S to be *prima facie* justified in believing that P. The larger issue I have though, is that I think dogmatism does *not* need to be revised.

4.2 Markie's Knowledge-How Proposal

Markie's response (2013) is fairly straight forward, he puts forward a knowledge-how proposal which states: seemings justify their contents only if they are the products of knowledge-how. In cases of perceptual belief, knowledge-how is a kind of disposition. So Novice is unjustified in his belief that the object is gold is because Novice does not know how to use his perceptual systems in identifying gold objects. Contra Expert, who does possess this disposition of identifying gold objects, and is, thereby justified in his belief (Markie 2013: 262-7).

I do have some sympathy with this response, and granted, Markie states that he needs to flush out more details. But one problem still remains: knowledge-how seems to run against the spirit of dogmatism. The disposition of knowledge-how has become a justification contributor which contradicts the claim that experiences *immediately* justify. Referring back to Tucker's point mentioned earlier, all (propositional) justification consists in, is the way things seem to S. Markie disagrees here, I take it he thinks that cognitive penetration cases are sufficient reason to revise dogmatism. In fact, this is true because he rejects, what he calls, "unqualified dogmatism" of which my perceptual dogmatism would be a token instance. McGrath's quasi-inferential account of seemings would be a kind of qualified dogmatism. Here, I am concerned with defending unqualified perceptual dogmatism, so my job is to find a way out, without qualifying my dogmatism.

4.3 Unqualified Dogmatism's Response

So here is where I offer my response, but I must concede, it's not outrightly mine. The response I am giving relies heavily upon the work of Fumerton (2013), Huemer (2013), and Tucker (2010). Nevertheless, consider the following case:

Suppose, for example, I'm an engineer designing a heat shield for a space capsule. People's lives depend on my getting everything right. I do some measurements and a couple of tests and everything seems to me OK. I know perfectly well, however, that there are many additional tests I could perform which would give me much more justification for believing that the shields will do their job (Fumerton 2013: 734).

This case, Fumerton argues, is a case of evidential indolence. It's clear that the engineer is making a mistake by not performing the additional tests, but why think that the belief formed is epistemically irrational? Fumerton claims that this might be a *practical rationality* failure due to neglecting to gather more evidence, but it does not follow from this, "that the belief I form on the basis of my limited evidence is *epistemically* irrational. The evidence I do have might still support my belief" (734). Fumerton cautions us though, he states that this case does *not* stipulate that the engineer had good reason to believe that the additional tests would undermine his original belief. If this were true, then the engineer would have a defeater for his justification.

Evidential indolence is at least similar to cases of cognitive penetration for as Fumerton claims:

Just as our epistemically indolent engineer might be criticized for his indolence and *derivatively* criticized for forming conclusions that might have flowed from that indolence, so also the defective people Siegel describes might be criticized for their defects and the beliefs that flow from them. But in neither case need these criticisms be construed as a negative evaluation of the epistemic status of the respective beliefs that are eventually formed (734).

Fumerton points out that there is definitely something defective about cases of cognitive penetration, but it is another question entirely whether they are *epistemic* defects.

Fumerton (and myself included) find it interesting that Siegel and others who think of cognitive penetration as epistemically pernicious, don't feel the same way about evil demon cases. Fumerton writes:

If we are in the land of evil demons and we are victimized by demon-induced hallucination, I think Siegel would allow that the resulting false beliefs we form about our environment would be epistemically justified. And it is interesting that most of us would probably agree that this kind of demon-induced hallucination is no sign of an *epistemic* defect on the part of the person who suffers the hallucination (734).

So how are cases of evidential indolence, evil demons, and cognitive penetration related? I'm going to draw out a distinction between known, potentially known, and inaccessible cases of penetration. Known cases include cases where the subject knows that her experience is penetrated. Potentially known cases are cases where the subject *could* come to know that her experience is penetrated. Lastly, inaccessible cases are

cases where the subject could *not* come to know that their experience is penetrated. I think known cases are easy to answer because the subject would have a defeater. Potentially known cases can be answered by the evidential indolence analogy: what exactly is the subject supposed to believe when, from her perspective, everything is “going according to plan”? Of course, she could do some reflecting, some intense psychological evaluation, maybe some mental journaling, etc.. But I think Fumerton is right, that if the subject did this, she might be better off epistemically, but failing to do so would only be a practical rationality failure. If the subject suspected that the mental checking would undermine justification to believe the content of the visual experience, then here too, the subject would have a defeater. Finally, inaccessible cases of penetration are like that of being deceived by the infamous evil demon. So, the story goes, S is not aware that they are being deceived and they could not even in principle come to know that. So the experiences S has, would justify belief in their contents.

I want to turn now to an objection raised by Siegel in her 2012. She claims that there are putative cases of cognitive penetration that are disanalogous to evil demon cases (or a “zap” in her terms) where the penetrating mechanism(s) are under the rational control of agent. She makes an analogy to holding people responsible of character traits. She writes:

For instance, we hold people responsible for some personality traits, such as being over- or underconfident. If vanity leads a performer to experience the neutral expression on the face of any audience member as approving, then the relationship between his vanity and his experience is not much like a zap. (213)

I take the objection to be carving a middle ground between a penetrating mechanism that is out of S's ken and within S's immediate awareness. It's likely that the performer isn't immediately aware of her vanity's role in the experience of the audience member, but because the vanity is under the performer's rational control, it's accessible to her. Furthermore, according to PD, she is justified in believing the contents of her perceptual experience, when intuitively, she isn't.

The three distinctions I made between known, potentially known, and inaccessible cases of penetration can handle this objection though, in particular, the potentially known category derived from Fumerton's epistemic indolence case. It seems to me that the performer, were she to reflect on the etiology of the penetrated audience member experience, she could become aware of the penetrating mechanism (her vanity). She doesn't do this, but that's not an epistemic failure of her's. Rather, it's a practical rationality failure. So on my view, the performer still has some justification to believe the content of her penetrated experience, but suffers from a practical rationality failure.

4.4 Summing up This Section

This section on the objection to PD from cognitive penetration explicated the objection, which is not that if cognitive penetration exists, it threatens justification. Rather, it is that if seemings do the justifying work, then cognitive penetration of experience gives us reason to think that seemings are not as trustworthy as we might have thought. Indeed, cases of cognitive penetration of experience suggests that we

ought to pay close attention to the etiology of experience, says Siegel. This threatens unqualified dogmatism by undermining the sufficiency of seemings.

My response to this objection relies upon two kinds of cases: (i) evidential indolence and (ii) evil demon scenarios. I used these cases to draw out the distinction between known, potentially known, and inaccessible cases of penetration. In each of these distinct cases of penetration, PD gets the right result. If the mechanism of penetration is known, one has a defeater. If it could be known, why think that one ought to become aware? Evidential indolence cases seems to suggest that extra mental exercises or evidence gathering are a matter of practical rationality, not epistemological. Lastly, with inaccessible cases, we should treat the victims no different from evil demon victims. That is, from their perspective, nothing is amiss, so they are justified in believing the content of their visual experiences.

5.0 Final Words

This paper aimed to defend perceptual dogmatism about propositional justification from three separate objections: (1) the SPO via Bergmann's dilemma and the metaphysics of seemings, (2) easy justification via closure and bootstrapping, and (3) cognitive penetration of experience. But if we get down to brass tax here, these three objections suggest that PD is too permissive-- PD allows for justification to easily. We saw that in the cognitive penetration section, that some philosophers agree that dogmatism unqualified is doomed. Instead, we ought to add in more conditions to quell these worries, but in doing this, these philosophers got too far from the spirit of

dogmatism. My intention was to make the case for unqualified dogmatism while remaining loyal to its spirit.

In the SPO section, Bergmann's dilemma was aimed at doxastic justification, but he neglected a key component in his definition of PD about doxastic justification-- the basing relation. The basing relation entails basing a belief that P on the seeming that P. We saw that it's possible to base a belief on bad evidence (the lyric "heart-attack"), but doing this does not justify the belief in question because the bad evidence does not evidentially support the belief like the appropriate seeming would. But we also saw that merely adding the basing relation clause is not enough to overcome Bergmann's dilemma because the conditions for non-accidentality from the subject's perspective were essentially strong awareness conditions. So we revised non-acc for more minimal requirements that still did the work of avoiding accidentality.

In the easy justification section, I showed that the age-old problem of easy knowledge has a sister-- the problem of easy justification. Just as the problem of easy knowledge arises out of basic knowledge allowance, easy justification arises out of certain basic justification structures. Two ways the problem can come up is (1) closure and (2) bootstrapping. I argued that PD can overcome the charge of easy justification by rely on distinctions in epistemic dependence following Pryor. The neo-moorean argument and Roxanne display a kind of epistemic dependence that is sensitive to defeating evidence. It is not the case that these arguments display premise circularity. PD does not commit one to premise circularity, which I diagnosed as the real issue

behind easy justification. The justification for the premises makes the conclusion more credible for you.

Lastly, in the cognitive penetration section, I attempted to show that while it might be true that seemings can be penetrated in visual experience, the implications of this on justification are not so bad. I argued that known mechanisms of penetration are defeaters, potentially known or potential to know mechanisms ought to be treated as cases of evidential indolence. As Fumerton points out, failure to gather more evidence is a practical rationality failure and not an epistemic failure. So if your visual experience experientially presents a portion of the world to you, and from your perspective, nothing is amiss, why search for extra evidence? Lastly, when the mechanism is inaccessible to the subject, it seems that these cases ought to be treated like evil demon cases. If John is being deceived by an evil demon and cannot know that he is, then his visual experience will justify belief in their contents. Likewise, if my visual experience is cognitively penetrated and I cannot know that this is so, then my visual experiences will justify belief in their contents.

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